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ABSTRACT

Noting that "one-third of all graduates of university public relations programs go to work for non-profit organizations" (Kelly, 1993), this paper focuses on the issues of accountability and assessment faced by nonprofit organizations with corresponding methods of evaluation. First, the paper demonstrates the extent of nonprofit organizations in American society and the impact of nonprofit organizations on public relations. The paper then explores the various publics who hold a nonprofit organization accountable. As these publics unfold, the paper discusses the specificity of goals or objectives, both long- and short-term. The paper also discusses ethical considerations of various fundraising techniques as related to the issue of accountability, and as they relate to the public relations practitioner. Contains 5 notes and 19 references. (RS)

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ASSESSMENT OF NONPROFIT PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORTS

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ASSESSMENT OF NONPROFIT PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORTS

Recently, a public supported media operation offered tickets to a Speakers' Series contingent upon member's pledge to a specified dollar amount. This author pledge the amount, and in fact, paid by check within two days of receipt of the pledge statement. There was a limited number of seats available for the events. The station over sold the memberships, because pledges do not guarantee payment, and did not provide the author with tickets because first priority went to members who charged their pledges. Since the seat limit was reached *before* her check arrived, the author was not given tickets to the Speaker's Series.

The station might have curbed overall resentment if they had sent notification of their predicament. However, the managing board decided against notifying those who had contributed but did not receive tickets. One week prior to the first speaker, the author called concerning the status of the tickets. The station explained the situation, their decision not to issue tickets, and their decision not to notify.

Using knowledge of public relations, the author explained her reactions in terms of organizational accountability. Since that time, the author has worked with the station to develop future guidelines for accountability in fund-raising endeavors, and **did** receive tickets for the Speaker's Series.

The ending to this situation is analogous to the fairy tale ending of "...and they lived happily ever after." This negative experience resulted in a positive solution because of the author's willingness to practice application of "textbook" fundamentals. Likely, most respondents

would not react in this positive manner. Indeed, others who were denied tickets indicated their unwillingness to the station management to make future membership pledges to the station.

This paper will focus on the issues of accountability and assessment faced by nonprofit organizations with corresponding methods of evaluation. First, the extent of nonprofits in our society and the impact of nonprofits on public relations, will be demonstrated. Secondly, the various publics who hold a nonprofit organization accountable will be explored. As these publics unfold, the specificity of goals or objectives, both long and short-term, will be discussed. Various methods of assessment are available and should be related to these goals. Ethical considerations of various fund raising techniques will be discussed as related to the issue of accountability, and as they realte to the public relations practitioner.

The number of nonprofit organizations is an ever-increasing facet of public and private work. Kelly (1993) estimates that "one-third of all graduates of public relations programs housed in departments or schools of journalism and mass communication go to work for nonprofit organizations" (p. 353). James Joseph, President of the Council on Foundations, emphasized the societal purpose of nonprofits when he contends that encouraging private generosity "...is fundamental to any society that has faith in the essential goodness of the individual...philanthropy is itself an important value...[it] can affirm and advance the connectedness of humanity [and its study] can serve as the social glue of the humanities" (Scala, 1992, p. 47).

The strength of this faith in individuals is supported by the figures on monetary contributions over several previous years which also represents reductions in federal funding that began during the 1980s. In 1991, there were an estimated 800,000 organizations categorized as charities. In 1989, 460,000 organizations qualified for IRS 501(c) status (Kelly, 1991). By 1991,

this number grew to 516,000 (Mixer, 1993).[1] These figures also demonstrate the changeable nature of the nonprofit world. During the years of 1987 and 1989, over 110,000 organizations were added to the list, while over 41,000 were removed (Mixer, 1993). Hilgert and Mahler (1991) estimate that nonprofit organizations are increasing at rates of between 8 to 15% per year.

The contribution figure to nonprofit organizations exceeded $100 billion in 1988, which was an all time record for nonprofits (Kelly, 1991). By 1992, more than 124.3 billion dollars was raised, and an estimated 69 million households provided this benefaction. This dollar amount represents a 6.4 % increase over charitable giving in 1991. Expectations are that the trend will continue. As James Joseph, Council of Foundations states, "Encouraging private generosity is fundamental to any society that has faith in the essential goodness of the individual" (Scala, 1992, p. 47).

The volume of voluntary charitable donations and organizations as beneficiaries of these donations has not seemed to reach an ebb. The question is, therefore, what is the role of the public relations practitioner in nonprofit organizations? Kelly (1991) contends that in regards to fund-raising, the role must be one of communications management. Her definition implies that "...public relations is broader than communication techniques, such as publications, and broader than specialized public relations programs, such as media relations, employee relations, or donor relations" (p. 9). She summarizes the role for the public relations practitioner as

> ..public relations is a boundary role of charitable organizations, responsible for helping these organizations manage their interdependencies, thereby, reducing

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[1]"Federal requirements exempt charitable organizations with annual revenues of less than $25,000 from filing IRS Form 990. 327,000 did not file in 1989. Of the 133,600 that did file, approximately 72% can be classified as small, that is, they have annual expenses below $500,000...and receive about 11% of the total public support" (Mixer, 1993, pp. 203-04).

> environmental uncertainty and buffering the organization from demands of interpenetrating systems. If interpenetrating systems move in directions other than that of the focal organization, conflict occurs and negotiation and compromise must take place. Such conflict may cause the organization to change; however, even if the change is positive, the organization still must manage the conflict to reduce the risk of losing a high degree of autonomy (p. 319).

This definition of the role of the public relations practitioner in nonprofit organizations should lead to an evaluation/assessment role as well. The difficulties of evaluation of public relations efforts has been well-documented, however, Jacobson (1980) may express it best when he compares measurement of PR efforts to "...trying to measure a bucket of eels...or only slightly easier than measuring a gaseous body with a rubber band" (p. 7). To clarify the issues involved in assessment, this paper will first examine the development of goals or objectives within the nonprofit organization.

Fundamental public relations texts speak to the importance of goal directed programs that assume a level of evaluation and measurement. Hendrix (1995) asserts "Objectives are the single most important element in this public relations process. They represent the practitioner's desired outcomes in communicating with the targeted publics" (p. 19). A primary objective should be developed in terms of the organization itself. As evidenced by the continuous development and discontinuation of nonprofit agencies, the purpose of the organization is the focal point for the fundamental objective. Additionally, the future of the organization must be considered. Speaking to this issue, Mixer (1993) writes:

> Planning in general causes organizations and their fundraising activities to look to the future. By selecting the optimum direction for the total organization, strategic planning proposes what should happen and how the organization can create that future rather than simply react to current trends. Strategic planning examines the strengths and weaknesses of the organization and the opportunities and threats it faces in its operating environment. The direction chosen in relation to the

> organization's mission, which may be redefined in the planning process, establishes fundraising goals and objectives. These intentions also influence the selection of the fourteen major fundraising methods that are available. Each of these means has strategic requirements that affect the subject organization and anticipated revenues. Selection of methods requires careful consideration of essential criteria drawn from the areas of needs, organization and operation. A prudently drawn development plan is one attuned to internal and external probabilities and poised for accomplishment (p. 244).

Even short-lived organizations should employ this objective consideration. Recently, I attended a developmental board meeting for an organization founded for the express purpose of bringing the Names Quilt (AIDS quilt) to the local area. The board is well developed and extremely well staffed. However, during the meeting, the issue of excess funds, monies raised over the expenses of the quilt display, was discussed. The board indicated an aspiration to raise more funds than necessary, and to use the surplus funds to support various other local organizations that work with HIV-positive individuals and AIDS patients. Preliminary fundraising had already occurred; yet this additional objective was not shared with the contributors. If this secondary objective was accepted by the board as a whole, the public must be made aware of this goal in order for the board to fully establish accountability.

Therefore, decisions regarding organizational objectives are integral to the effective functioning not only of the organization, but of fundraising efforts. Efforts directed towards fundraising are multidimensional. Too often, fundraising may be viewed as the primary objective of an organization, which results in a lack of concerns for key areas of assessment. Included here are concerns for the various publics involved in any nonprofit operation.

Kelly (1991) identified four types of strategic publics: enabling, functional, normative and diffused. "Using these concepts, donors can be defined as an enabling public that provides

necessary resources for charitable organization, much like stockholders provide revenue for corporations. Fund raising, therefore, can be viewed as managing interdependencies between a charitable organization and its donor publics" (p. 296-7). The present author contends that this identification must extend beyond the domain of monetary considerations; successful connections to key publics by any nonprofit organization applies these divisions.

An enabling public allows the organization to not only successfully raise funds, but also to conduct the business necessary to attain the primary objective. This same public could be classified as functional, normative, and diffused. The domain of a public relations practitioner as an assessment agent includes managing the association between the organization and these various publics. "Marketing research has shown that someone who has an unpleasant experience with an organization is likely to tell three times as many people about that experience as someone who has a pleasant experience" (Johnson and Laviano, 1991, p. 35). Repeatedly, the issue of identification of publics in conjunction with the organization's goals and objectives is crucial to successful public relations management.

Primary attention has been directed towards the monetary donors. Kelly (1991) addressed the issue of donor involvement and organization autonomy:

> These fund-raising interdependencies constitute an ongoing exchange process that requires management and negotiation by the charitable organization, especially by those practitioners who manage its fund-raising function. The concept of autonomy is a central issue in the exchange process in that the power of a charitable organization to determine and pursue its own goals is affected by how successful that organization is at managing its interdependencies. Although absolute autonomy is impossible, all charitable organizations in the nonprofit sector face a double-edge sword in relation to interdependencies with donors in their environment. In order to enhance their autonomy, they must seek external funding to support their institutional goals, but in so doing, they risk losing autonomy by accepting gifts that may limit their power to determine goals and the

means of pursuing them (pp. 292-3).

Repeatedly, one can see the concept of interdependency as a necessary element of a nonprofit organization. However, the claim of increased interdependency for nonprofits may not be totally substantiated. Every organization is faced with the task of autonomy with regards to various strategic publics; for-profit organizations develop the same interdependencies upon consumers, community, local, state and federal government, and their work-force. The issue addressed in this paper is that nonprofits have historically ignored the concept of multiple publics in exchange for a dominant focus upon the donor public.

As with any organization, a nonprofit should list multiple publics in their targeted communications. These publics include: the organization itself, the paid staff members, volunteer board members, other volunteers who give in terms of time and work effort, and both large and small monetary donors. Any single individual may be included in a number of these categories. Evaluation and assessment can, and should occur, within all categories, and should not be limited to the fundraising accomplishment. Each year, Money (Smith, 1993), publishes its annual ratings of Charities in America. In 1993, the magazine rated charities in term of long-term efficiency--the average percentage of income spent on programs over the past three years. The top rated charity for 1993, AmeriCares Foundation, was able to devote 99.1% of this income to program spending.[2] While this rating is sought after for public relations propaganda to monetary donors, it does not address the issue of multiple publics.

Almost every basic public relations text includes a chapter on employees as a public. The

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[2]The author is not certain of how they arrived at this figure. As part of the report, Money cites that AmeriCares spends 1.7% of its income on fundraising, and 1.2% of income on administration.

same must be applied to a nonprofit organization. The efficient function of the nonprofit is dependent upon the productive capacity of the paid staff. Many times, the staff must respond to a national organization and a local chapter, and this increases the dependence upon the staff for a successful operation. Assessment of staff in terms of relations with all strategic publics must be undertaken. This staff is responsible not only to the national organization, if one exists, but also to a local board of directors. Howe (1991) posits the role of the board:

> ...to fulfill their fund-raising responsibility, boards must oversee the decisions and activities of chief executives and their staffs without themselves preempting staff responsibilities or doing the work that staff should do. Because fund raising calls for more direct, personal involvement and participation of trustees than do other aspects of an organization, this line between management and oversight becomes harder to draw.
> It is essential for board members to understand sufficiently what is involved in staff matters, in order to be able to oversee *and* participate.

The staff and board are then accountable to the volunteers, which likely result in the accruement of donors. All of these levels must be considered for an accurate and thorough view of assessment and accountability.

Volunteers as a strategic public have largely been ignored in terms of assessment. Wilcox, Ault and Agee (1992) argue that the recruitment and training of volunteers is the fourth objective of a voluntary agency. This author contends that retention should also be included under this objective. Measurement of retention, and satisfaction with the organization, would allow for a more detailed level of assessment.

> A corps of volunteer workers is essential to the success of almost every philanthropic enterprise. Far more work needs to be done than a necessarily small professional staff can accomplish. Recruiting and training volunteers, and maintaining their enthusiasm so they will be dependable long-term workers, is an important public relations function. Organizations usually have a chairperson of volunteers, who either answers to the public (often called community relations)

director or depends upon the director for assistance (p. 470).

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1989, one in five American adults volunteer time, with a median weekly contribution of just over four hours per week. Seitel (1992) predicts that the American public's propensity for volunteering is a catalyst towards nonprofit expansion and proliferation.

In this schemata of strategic publics, monetary donors are listed last, not in line of importance, because the nonprofit cannot exist without the monetary support. Donors are listed last because without successful functioning on the previously detailed levels, the issue of donors may become a mute point. Critical assessment and evaluation of these other publics which provides a positive image for the nonprofit can result in a positive appeal to the monetary donors.

Monetary donors form the outward basis for a nonprofit assessment. As this public is identified, methods of assessment can be formulated. Edmondson (1986) identifies the characteristics strategic to donor identification. People between the ages of 34 and 64 comprise the largest segment of donors, with ages 50 to 64 comprises the largest segment. Other demographic information which tends to identify donors include, "a college education, annual income of $50,000 or more, marriage and a professional occupation." (p. 45). Edmondson also noted that the use of the funds to assist local efforts was a positive element for many donors.

Ledingham (1993) explored the predictor variables related to donors to a local United Way campaign. Those who donated met the profile described by Edmondson. He describes the non-givers as "...a population segment less involve with and less interested in the society that is reality for older, more established persons who have--by virtue of parenthood, probably home

ownership and other factors--a higher stake in the community" (p. 380). Further, he concludes that the non-givers do not perceive a direct relation to personal needs. "And, their age does not predispose them to think about heart disease, cancer and many of the other concerns that may be in the minds of their older counterparts (p. 380). While there is a clear differentiation between the giver and the non-giver, the actual category of donors as a strategic public should be further delineated between large and small donors. As previously cited, Kelly describes the conflict that may occur between autonomy of an organization and a large donor. But for many organizations, the small donor is the core of the giver population.

When AmeriCares was given the uppermost rating by Money (Smith, 1993) magazine, the organization related the large percentage of donors who contributed substantial monetary amounts or corporate donors who underwrote key parcel denotations. On the other hand, the Disabled Veterans Administration (DAV) was ranked low on the list in percentage of program spending, and high on the list regarding income spent on fund-raising efforts. "A spokesman for DAV of Cold Spring, Ky. says the group must spend such a high percentage of its $71 million in income on fund raising because its average donation is small--under $10" (p. 131).[3] Clearly, the donor public identification impacts on the evaluation of fund raising techniques and strategies.

A local chapter of a national health charity offers a clear example of this differentiation necessary for a fully successful fund raising effort. During its annual fund raising event, local individuals are "jailed" by the society. They are "bailed" out by donors they personally have recruited. This past year, all of the large "prisoners", over $5,000 in pledged "bail money", were recruited well in advance of the event. However, the chapter neglected to solicit smaller donors

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[3]5.4% of income was spent on fund raising.

during their preparation. The "jail" was in the axis of the local shopping center, and would be the focal point of the fund raising effort. The large donors were small in number, and would only be there for short periods of time. Large numbers of "prisoners" were necessary for solicitation of on-site donations, media coverage, and community responsiveness. One day before the event, staff and a small number of volunteers were frantically calling to request small donors to be "jailed." The end result of this omission was a negative response from staff and volunteers concerning the lack of foresight and planning. This example clearly demonstrated the necessity of differentiation between levels of givers for assessment. The fund raising event was a success in terms of dollars collected; however, the event was not a success in terms of staff and volunteer evaluation. Also, media coverage was largely thwarted by the lack of participation at the event.

Accountability to all strategic publics is therefore the primary area of accountability and assessment within a nonprofit organization. Regarding educational foundations, Kelly (1991) writes:

> ...charitable organizations strive to stabilize external dependencies on donors through joint ventures, such as industrial-university partnerships, and through cooptation, such as placing major donors on governing boards. Although such strategies do reduce the environmental uncertainty related to the need to continually raise private gifts, they also abdicate some degree of organizational control to external sources of gifts. In addition, such strategies may increase the vulnerability of a charitable organization by encouraging dependence on gift exchanges involving joint partners or coopted donors (p. 293).

Necessity involved in fund raising demands that major donors be a strategic public. But as the list of charitable organizations in Money indicates, all charities will not have the luxury of major donors as the central source of revenue. Again, the explicit objectives of the organization can aid in the development of assessment of donor publics.

Jacobson (1980) cites the changing focus of nonprofit funding, from the federal to the private level, as introducing a new view of assessment. "In the Age of Accountability, a concern for the consumer and a desire for a bigger bang for the buck heightens the need to prove and improve our activities. Practitioners no longer can depend on time-honored homilies to justify their existence. Guesswork is giving way to design, data and documentation" (p. 7). Yet, it would seem that many nonprofits have not succumbed to this detailed process of "design, data and documentation". Payton (1989) argued that "flexibility and responsiveness are more characteristic" (p. 65) in the nonprofit realm than in the business and government sectors. Council of Foundations President James Joseph asserts that "...openness and inclusiveness are fundamental principles and practices for effectiveness in philanthropy" (Scala, 1992, p. 47) This trend extends to all levels of nonprofit organizations. Public Education Fund Network President, Wendy Puriefoy stated "...grantmakers and seekers need to evaluate how their efforts are increasing community responsiveness" (Scala, 1992, p. 48).

The concepts of flexibility and responsiveness are most vividly exemplified by the current move toward telemarketing and cause-related marketing by nonprofit organizations. "Every year, hundreds of millions of dollars are raised in the United States through the telemarketing efforts of nonprofit organizations. Some nonprofits carry out their own telemarketing programs, while others rely on professional fundraisers" (Johnson & Laviano, 1991, p. 34). Clearly, the trend is established: telemarketing is a more efficient method of fund raising than many of the alternatives which involve staff, volunteers, and a large number of work hours. Johnson and Laviano point out that the pervasiveness of telemarketing has reached such monumental proportions that the state of North Carolina developed the Charitable Solicitations Act. Essentially, this act

determined that a fee of up to twenty percent was reasonable. Restrictions were placed for a fee between 20 and 35%, and any fee above 35% was unreasonable. "The Act also required that a professional fundraiser disclose the average percentage of gross receipts turned over to the charity by the fundraiser within the last twelve months" (p. 35). [4]

A second alternative to traditional fundraising is the relatively new use of cause-related marketing. Cause related marketing has two major facets. First, a corporation will become involved with a cause in order to positively increase the[5] public's perception of its product. Coors Brewing Company has committed $40 million to a five-year campaign aimed at decreasing illiteracy. The overall goal of campaigns such as this is to convince the public of the company's sincerity with regard to social issues. For the 1992 Olympics, corporations paid an average of $15 million for the right to link their products with Olympic events; the sponsors had to pay $40 million for the link to the 1994 games at Lillehammer (Levine, 1992, p. 30). This "Good Samaritan" approach to corporate marketing may be the wave of the future (Oldenburg, 1992).

The second facet of cause-related marketing is the proliferation of products advertised as "contributing a portion of the profits to" or "in sponsorship of" a particular nonprofit organization. "Cause-related marketing is *business* marketing, not marketing of a nonprofit organization. The controversy is not a question of whether it is sound business but rather,

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[4]This act was eventually declared unconstitutional, but the problem of telemarketing as a substitute for in-house fundraising has not vanished. The Court, in overturning the Act, suggested financial disclosure by the charities involved, and prosecution, under anti-fraud laws, for professional fundraisers who used false pretenses or false statements in the solicitation process.

[5]The author is doubtful of how this differs from the local organizations from the schools, baseball leagues, etc., which sale products such as candy bars, and cards, as a fundraising effort.

whether it is sound philanthropy" (Howe, 1991, p. 115). Warning of the potential donating public of the scams, Redbook (Khalaf, 1993) cites a too common example. The National Federation of the Blind in New York State authorized vendors to sell a box of candy with the charity's name on it. In truth, the charity received $2.00 per box, the profits went to the vendors. The State of New York has sued the organization and the vendors. The article continues by warning consumers that certain telemarketing approaches use false information, such as identifying the caller as a member of the sponsoring organization, when in fact they are hired telemarketers. This source of a popular magazine, while not normally included in a scholarly paper, highlights the overwhelming need for nonprofit assessment and accountability. In cause-related marketing, "Consumers responding to such marketing devices may be misled into thinking they are giving when in fact they are buying" (Howe, 1991, p. 115). The fundraising technique employed must be itself subject to assessment, because as Howe (1991) indicates, the company sharing the profits might try to place demands upon the nonprofit organization, resulting in modification of programs.

The impact on the advertising industry on public relations was evaluation of the message itself. However, these recent trends emphasize the need to determine "...what the publics' perceptions are of the actions as well as the messages that are being heard about an organization" (Strenski, 1980, p. 12). These perceptions can function as a basis for future programs employed by the nonprofit organization. The need for assessment, therefore, includes not only the amount of contributions, but the method and the messages utilized in the attainment of funds.

The central issue presented in this paper is that assessment is multi-dimensional; there can be no single determining factor in rating the overall nonprofit program, such as that employed by

Money. Mixer (1993) comments on the notion of the "culture" of the nonprofit:

> An accurate assessment of fundraising in large organizations required a close examination of their cultures, which have developed over many years...an organizational culture consists of the values, attitudes, and precedents that bind the entity together. This culture is sometimes expressed as the "glue" that envelops everyone in an organization...The culture determines attitudes about fundraising and influences its acceptance and success (p. 236-7).

The concept of culture encompasses all the diverse strategic publics established in this paper. Each public brings to the nonprofit a set of attitudes and precedents that may contrast in crucial areas, but also may correspond in others. The coordination of this similarities and differences may be a crucial component for assessment.

In July, 1992, the Council on Foundations' (COF) annual meeting was dominated by the controversy over the National United Way in regards to the Arimony scandal. Reacting to the event, President James Joseph commented "...foundations are responsible to 'stake holders': donors, donees, foundation boards and government...responsible governance and efficient management are all part of the public trust" (Scala, 1992, p. 47).

It is this concept of the public trust that should be expanded and examined in assessing nonprofit organizations. Traditional analysis of the fundraising ability and percentage of income devoted to program spending will not suffice as organizations brace for the changes likely to develop as we approach and enter the twenty-first century. Several concepts essential to effective public relations are applicable to assessment of the nonprofit organization.

Foremost in this assessment must be the development of adequate long and short term objectives. As with any public relations campaign, the evaluation of effectiveness is dependent upon the stated objectives. If the only objective is fund raising, as applicable to AmeriCares, then

the traditional assessment of monetary intake/output can suffice. However, when the complexity of objectives reach beyond this rudimentary status, assessment must also become more multifarious. The classification of various publics upon a strategic continuum is the fundamental tactic in this multi-level assessment. The publics should each be included in identifiable objectives, in order to thoroughly program a procedure for assessment. Various methods are available to assess the staff, board members, volunteers and donors, dependent upon the declared objectives. The public relations practitioner is aware of the concept of mediated message campaigns, that the electronic media has little ability to change attitudes and behaviors:

> ...the major effort of mediated messages in a campaign environment is to reinforce existing attitudes and predispositions...However, attitudes alone are often insufficient to motivate behavior...Public information campaigns may lead to an increase in knowledge, which may, in turn, affect attitudes and, perhaps, behavior. What this study seems to indicate is that the link between attitudes and behavior is tenuous...But what it also suggests is that a mix of mass media and interpersonal communication can serve as the linkage that turns attitude into action" (Ledingham, 1993, p. 367-384).

As previously mentioned, the board of an organization is an essential link to/and between staff and volunteers. Volunteers are integral to most nonprofit organizations in operationalizing the concept of mediated messages. "Active, satisfied volunteers do more than provide a workforce for an organization. They also form a channel of communication into the community" (Wilcox, Ault, Agee, 1992, p. 473).

One local health services nonprofit organization completely neglected its corps of volunteers. Local volunteers continually made suggestions for improvements and change and chapter development, while the district office (from a larger city 30 miles away) insisted that the chapter focus only upon fund raising attempts. After several near disastrous attempts, the local

volunteers stopped attending the chapter functions. Presently, the local chapter is still in existence; however, the participation of volunteers is down to only one or two individuals, from a pool of over thirty, and the district office is still insisting upon the fund raising projects, which raise very little money, and result in negative public relations due to the limited, to nonexistent, public response.

Functional assessment of a nonprofit organization is an aggregate of objectives, publics and messages. Regardless of the assigned placement of the public relations practitioner, assessment combines these areas to allow for a complete picture of the organization. True, the lack of a definite placement of public relations activities in nonprofits can cause problems, but, in reality, the work of any nonprofit should be viewed inclusively as a public relations campaign.

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